

Planning Committee

3 July 2026

Agenda item number 14

Customer satisfaction survey 2026

Report by Planning Technical Support Officer

Summary

The Broads Authority's Planning Department has recently undertaken its annual Customer Satisfaction Survey, the results of which show a high level of satisfaction with the planning service.

Recommendation

To note the report

1. Introduction

- 1.1. As part of its commitment to best practice in delivery of the planning service, the Broads Authority as Local Planning Authority (LPA) engages formally with its service users to seek their views on the quality of the service. This is done using a Customer Satisfaction Survey and is undertaken annually. The National Parks follow a similar approach, although they survey every two years. This report sets out the results of this engagement in 2026.

2. Customer Satisfaction Survey

- 2.1. The customer satisfaction survey was undertaken by sending a questionnaire to all applicants and agents who had received a decision on a planning application during the period 1 January to 31 March 2026. A total of 42 survey emails were sent out. This is the standard methodology used by all the National Parks over a given period. The contact details used were those submitted on the planning application form and recipients could respond online through Microsoft Forms.

- 2.2. As in previous years, the questionnaire asked the recipients to respond and rate the service in respect of the following areas:
1. Advice prior to, and during, the application process
 2. Communication on the progress of the application
 3. Speed of response to queries
 4. Clarity of the reasons for the decision
 5. Being treated fairly and being listened to
 6. The overall processing of the application
- 2.3. The survey also gave the opportunity for users to rate the service on elements it did well and those which could be improved, as well as giving a general comments section. A copy of the survey is attached at Appendix 1.

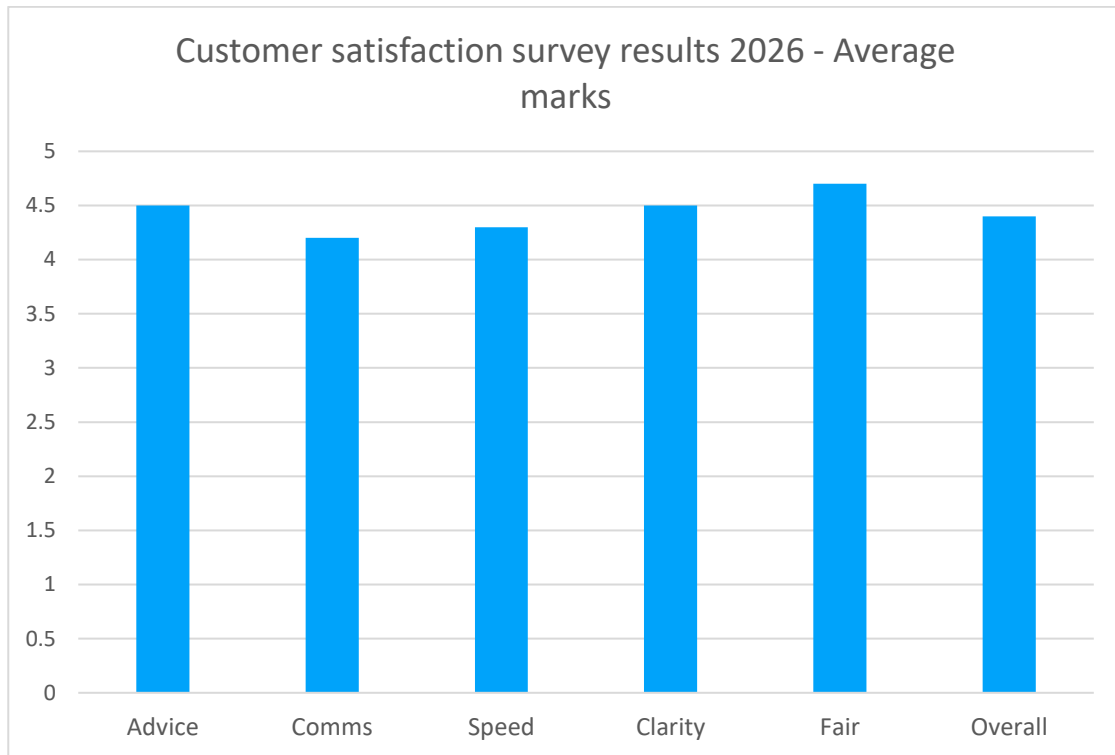
3. Responses

- 3.1. Ten responses were received, representing a response rate of 23.8%. This is an increase of 1.2% compared to 2025 (22.6%). The response rate is considered encouraging, and issuing the survey online continues to improve the number of responses received compared to when the surveys were issued by post.
- 3.2. In considering the results from the questionnaire and assessing the level of satisfaction, the scoring parameters are based on information published by Info Quest, a company that specialises in customer satisfaction surveys and analysis. These note that a goal of 100% satisfaction is commendable, but most likely unattainable as people tend to be inherently critical and it is practically impossible to always keep everyone satisfied.
- 3.3. They therefore consider that a customer awarding a score of 4 or above (out of 5) is a satisfied customer. They also note that, on average, any measurement that shows a satisfaction level equal to or greater than 75% is considered exceptional. It should be noted that applicants for all decisions approvals and refusals were asked to take part in the survey. The scoring parameters are:

% Satisfaction	Qualitative Assessment	Comment
75%+	Exceptional	Little need or room for improvement
60% - 75%	Very Good	You are doing a lot of things right
45% - 60%	Good	The level of most successful companies
30% - 45%	Average	Bottom line impact is readily available
15% - 30%	Problem	Remedial actions required
0% - 15%	Serious Problem	Urgent remedial actions required

3.4. Customers were asked to rate the service on a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the highest score. The respondents' answers are shown below.

3.5. Average scores for the questions are shown in the following graph:

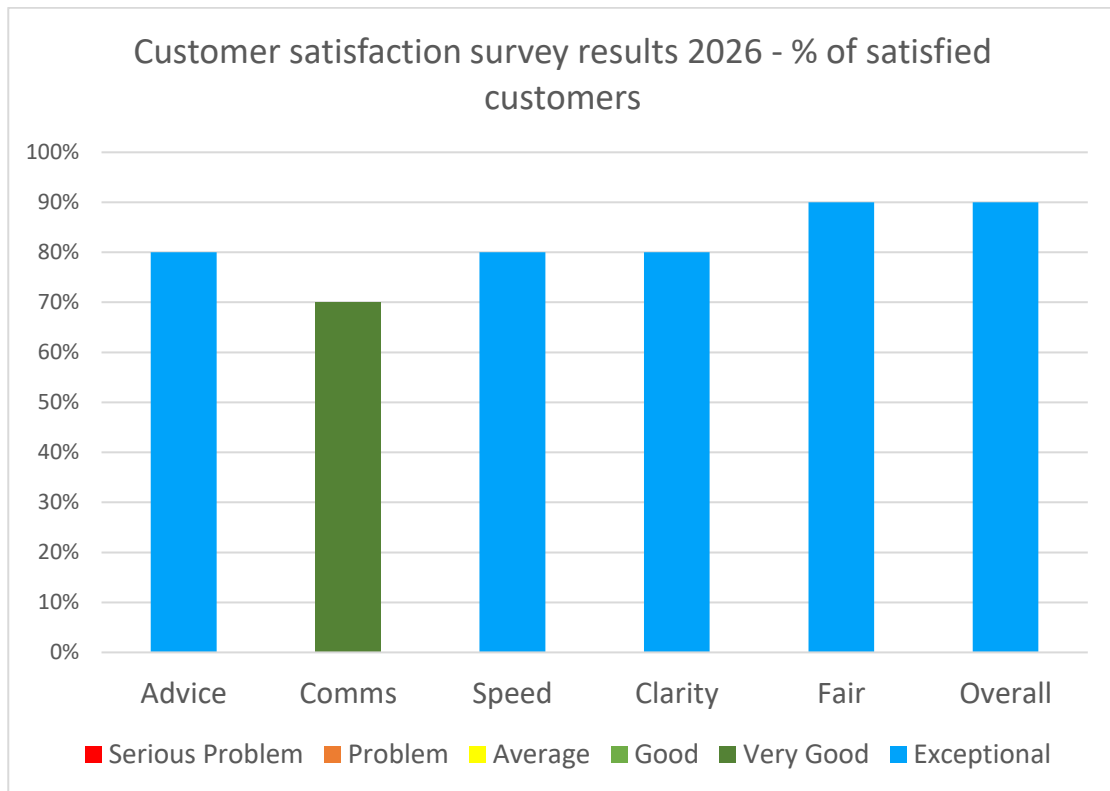


3.6. Average scores for the questions are shown in the following table:

Survey category	Average score (out of 5)
Advice	4.5
Comms	4.2
Speed	4.3
Clarity	4.5
Fair	4.7
Overall	4.4

3.7. It is noted that all but two responses gave full marks on advice, clarity of decision and fairness.

3.8. The overall results are represented under the satisfaction parameters detailed at 3.3 in the following graph:



3.9. The overall results are represented under the satisfaction parameters detailed at 3.3 in the following table:

Survey category	Percentage of satisfied customers	Qualitative assessment
Advice	80%	Exceptional
Comms	70%	Very Good ¹
Speed	80%	Exceptional
Clarity	80%	Exceptional
Fair	90%	Exceptional
Overall	90%	Exceptional

3.10. The survey also provides an opportunity for customers to comment on what the planning team did well and where improvements could be made. These comments are summarised below.

¹ 03/07/2026 Correction: reference to Good replaced by Very Good

3.11. The areas that were done well were identified as:

- Good communication; useful as it enables easy discussions regarding processes and progress of applications with planning officers
- Beneficial preapplication service to discuss requirements before submitting planning applications
- Helpful and engaging planning officers

3.12. The areas for improvement were identified as:

- Timescales for validation and decision making
- Overly complicated legislation and processes
- Lack of clarity on houseboats and their acceptability

3.13. Four of the ten respondents had no suggestions for improvements

3.14. The areas for improvement have been noted for consideration. However, it should be noted that legislation is set nationally, not by the Authority itself, and timescales are variable and depend on the complexity of the proposals. Further to this, applications can only be validated when all the required supporting information has been received.

3.15. The final question on the form sought suggestions for other improvements, designed to pick up examples of best practice from elsewhere. However, the comments largely reflect those entered on the previous question.

3.16. Most of the comments are likely to be in response to a particular experience or application type. Although this makes the feedback more difficult to interpret, it is considered that these comments are mainly suggestions for improving the service offered, rather than criticisms of the Planning Department's performance.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The results of the survey are positive, although some caution should be exercised in interpreting them, given the low numbers on which they are based. However, customers who have a negative experience are statistically between two and three times more likely to give feedback compared to those who are happy with their experience. Therefore, the low response rate, as well as the generally positive feedback, is likely to demonstrate that on the whole customers are largely satisfied with the service received.

Author: Thomas Carter

Date of report: 15 May 2026

Appendix 1 – [Customer Satisfaction Survey 2026](#)

Appendix 1 – Customer Satisfaction Survey 2026

From: Planning
Subject: Broads Authority Planning Department - Customer Satisfaction Survey 2026

Dear

Your comments on the Broads Authority's Planning Service.

The Broads Authority is carrying out a brief survey of people who have submitted planning applications to us and is asking them for their feedback on the quality of service they received. The comments that we receive are really important to help us understand what we do well and what we need to improve. We know these sorts of questionnaires can be time consuming to complete so we have kept it really simple, but if you want to add further details (or even email or telephone with further comments) these would be very welcome.

All responses received by the 20th April 2026 will be entered into a prize draw, with the chance of winning a trip on one of the Broads Authority's 3 passenger boats (Ra/Liana/Electric Eel). The prize draw will take place on 27th April 2026 and the winner will be informed shortly afterwards.

The application that this email is in reference to is BA/2026/XXXX/XXXX

Please use [THIS LINK](#) to access the survey:

Kind Regards,

Planning Services
Broads Authority
Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1RY

Please note that the Planning Department are mostly working from home. We encourage you to use email and phone for correspondence at this time as this will enable your enquiry to be dealt with more quickly.

Please tell us about your overall satisfaction level around:

5 = very good 4 = good 3 = okay 2 = poor.... 1 = very poor

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | The advice and help you were given in submitting your application | _____ |
| 2 | How well you were kept informed of progress on your application | _____ |
| 3 | How promptly we dealt with your queries | _____ |
| 4 | How clearly you understood the reasons for the decision | _____ |
| 5 | Whether you felt you were treated fairly and your views were listened to | _____ |
| 6 | The overall processing of your planning application | _____ |

Please tell us about:

7 Things we did well

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8 Things we could improve

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9 Any other things we could do to improve the service

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Thank you for your time in completing this.